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### Legislation aims to help more U.S. students study abroad

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## **NEWS RELEASE**

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Aug. 1, 2006

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### **LEGISLATION AIMS TO HELP MORE U.S. STUDENTS STUDY ABROAD**

#### **MISSOULA—**

Federal legislation to establish a national fellowship program with the goal of increasing the number of U.S. students who study abroad to one million per year in 10 years was introduced in Congress recently.

The Abraham Lincoln Study Abroad Act of 2006 was introduced by U.S. Sens. Dick Durbin, D-Ill., and Norm Coleman, R-Minn., on July 26.

The act funds direct fellowships for undergraduate students to encourage and support study abroad, as well as provides grants to institutions for programs and policies that encourage student participation in study-abroad experiences.

University of Montana President George Dennison expressed strong support for the initiative, noting the need to find ways to increase the number of American students studying abroad – currently about 190,000, compared to more than 590,000 international students studying in the United States.

In addition, the new program will provide assistance to students who lack the wherewithal to consider studying abroad, Dennison said.

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“Some years ago, I challenged the faculty to find ways to assure that every student who graduates from The University of Montana has an international experience,” he said. “The Lincoln Program will help us to achieve that goal.”

Many of the legislation’s provisions come from the groundbreaking report “Global Competence and National Needs: One Million Students Studying Abroad,” published last year by the Commission on the Abraham Lincoln Study Abroad Fellowship Program.

“Strong study-abroad programs are vital to our economic competitiveness, international diplomacy and national security,” said Peter McPherson, chair of the commission and president of the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges. “Students are our country’s best ambassadors. They tell a story about America no government official can.”

Further information about the legislation and the commission’s report can be found online at <http://www.lincolncommission.org> and <http://www.yearofstudyabroad.org>.

Information about study-abroad opportunities at UM is available at <http://www.umt.edu/oip> or by calling the International Programs office at 406-243-2288.

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